

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR'S REPORT
JANUARY 2026**

SUBMITTED TO: Jill Goldsmith, Town Manager
SUBMITTED BY: Leah LaCross, Director of Community Services

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES:

On January 9th, I began the 6-week Suffolk University/Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) graduate level Human Resources Seminar. In the first few modules, we focused on learning about Collective Bargaining and Municipal Law.

From January 22nd through January 24th, I attended the MMA's annual Connect 351 Conference in Boston. Speakers included Timothy Shriver, Governor Maura Healy, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, and Boston Mayor Michele Wu. The mini learning sessions were insightful, and there were many great opportunities for networking with leadership from other Massachusetts municipalities.

On January 27th, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Ryder's Cove Respite and Adult Supportive Day Program. Participants, caregivers, loved ones and staff enjoyed a celebratory luncheon, participant "awards", caregiver remarks and a delicious cake.

Aimee Howell, Deputy Director of Community Services, Recreation and Beaches Division, celebrated her 3-year anniversary with the Town on Friday, January 30th.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICIAN / CLINICAL SERVICES:

In the month of January, I had 76 interactions with 26 Chatham residents, for a total of 34 hours and 8 hours of professional development and community events.

In addition to my typical calls of service for our community members, January brought frigid, snowy weather that Chatham has not seen in many years. Along with that came an uptick in need for clinical services to those who were living alone and were "stuck" in their homes without the ability to get necessities. There were also many people who were feeling the effects of long, grey, cold days in New England and needed someone to speak with.

COA DIVISION:

DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT:

January call trends showed continued demand for Transportation and CFAL Programs, increased Outreach Resource inquiries mainly due to snow removal and our special assistance

group. Additionally, as we are entering tax season, calls for our AARP services have increased as well.

Transportation: 188

CFAL Programs: 170

SHINE: 52

Outreach Resources: 88

Adult Supportive Day Program: 23

Administrative/ Miscellaneous: 54

OUTREACH:

For the month of January, the Chatham Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator had 333 separate interactions for 171 individuals. Healthy Meals In Motion serves 33 households and added 4 new families. With the winter weather in full swing, Outreach was responsible for managing the Emergency Management *Special Assistance List*, 89 separate interactions for 39 individuals coordinating storm preparations to ensure residents continued safety.

TRANSPORTATION:

In January, Chatham's Center for Active Living (CFAL) Transportation Services experienced a slight decrease in overall ride volume due to multiple snow events and weather-related closures affecting both CFAL operations and medical offices. Medical appointments remained the highest priority and most utilized service, with 38 rides provided during the month. Despite challenging conditions, CFAL proactively coordinated with the Chatham Fire Department to ensure participant safety, including securing driver availability before and after storms and arranging emergency transportation if road conditions became unsafe. While CFAL continues to accommodate transportation requests whenever possible, medical appointments remain the top priority, and personal trips may be rescheduled as needed to ensure access to essential care.

	Nov-2025	Dec-2025	Jan-2026
CFAL Programs:	17	11	9
Grocery Access:			
Stop and Shop Trip	29	29	26
Chatham Village Market Deliveries	12	16	13
Healthy Meals in Motion	14	7	6
Medical Appointments:	50	42	38
Orlean Supportive Day:	16 (3 Participants)	22 (3 Participants)	21 (3 Participants)
Other Errands:	11	19	17
Prescription Deliveries:	4	13	6
Ryders Cove Respite :	11 (3 Participants)	6 (2 participants)	22 (2 participants)

Please note: All rides listed above are round-trip rides (to and from the scheduled destination), except for Grocery Access, Healthy Meals in Motion, and Prescription Deliveries.

PROGRAMMING:

January Highlights:

January at the Center for Active Living (CFAL) began with the launch of a new program, *Music Monday*. The inaugural performance featured 12-year-old cellist Zach White, a member of the Cape Cod Youth Symphony and a student at Cape Cod Academy.

Music Monday will continue the first Monday of each month in 2026 and will feature a rotating lineup of guest artists.

The CFAL also introduced the *Legacy Podcasting School*, in collaboration with the Cape Media Center. Staff from Cape Media Center visited CFAL to introduce the program and outline the opportunity for participants. The six-week program guides participants through developing and recording a personal legacy story, learning to use audio recording equipment, and editing a final product to share with family and loved ones.

The CFAL opened scheduling for its annual *AARP Tax-Aide* program. This free, volunteer-run service is available to any community member who needs assistance with tax preparation. In advance of the appointment season.

CFAL also hosted a weekly screening of *Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones* documentary series, which explored lifestyle practices associated with longevity and well-being in communities around the world.

Additionally, the CFAL entered our second year welcoming a Monomoy student intern who will support programming and operations for the remainder of the school year.

RYDER'S COVE RESPITE PROGRAM:

Demand for the Ryder's Cove Adult Supportive Day Program continues to grow. As of January, two prospective participants were actively exploring enrollment, reflecting sustained community interest and increasing program visibility.

January also marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of Ryder's Cove Respite. To celebrate this milestone, a luncheon was held with COA staff, participants, caregivers, family members, and volunteers in attendance.

January programming included dominoes, bingo, memory-based games, puzzles, winter-themed canvas art, and structured art projects. Movement-based activities such as seated basketball, chair yoga and cornhole were conducted weekly, supporting hand-eye coordination, gross motor movement, and social interaction. Music is consistently one of the most enjoyed elements among all participants.

The Program Aide position was successfully filled in January. The new staff member brings prior dementia-care experience and is bilingual in Spanish. This has resulted in measurable improvements in engagement and communication for a Spanish-speaking participant, including increased participation and improved staff understanding of the participant's care needs.

January attendance averaged 90%, reflecting strong participant retention, satisfaction, and consistent utilization of services.

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Council on Aging Board of Directors met on Wednesday, January 21st, and welcomed Jo Fennell, Director of Ryder's Cove Respite Program as a speaker. Committee members also heard an update from members of the CFAL Renovation Building Working Group (BWG).

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE:

The Human Services Committee met on Monday, January 12th, and welcomed grant recipients Marianne Ryan, Executive Director of Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands (ESCCI) and Ann Tessier, Executive Director at Cape Mediation.

RECREATION AND BEACHES DIVISION

The PARK Afterschool Program is for students in grades 3-7 to have a safe, fun, and engaging afterschool experience. It is also the intent of the program to foster a sense of community and to forge new and lasting friendships among the students attending the program.

	October	November	December	January
Monthly Attendance	829	545	615	710
Money Collected	\$10,375	\$6,655	\$6,800	\$9,010
Average Daily Attendance	38	36	41	36

Programming

Adults:

Winter Night Pickleball- 192 Participants, Winter Indoor Pickleball Mon-Fri- 322 Participants, Winter Adult Basketball- 25 participants, Pickleball Lessons- 12 participants, Yoga with Jackie!- 71 Participants, Winter Floor Hockey- 29 Participants, Winter Badminton- 8 participants, Fun and Functional Fitness- 12 participants, Fly Casting- 20 participants

Youth:

January Family Karate-8 participants, January Family Tai Chi- 4 Participants, Youth Skating Session 2- 30 participants, Grades 3-4 Boys Basketball- 1 team (14 participants), Grades 5-6 Boys Basketball- 1 team (10 participants), Grades 1-2 Basketball – 4 teams 21 participants, Kindergarten Basketball- 5 participants, Pre-School Basketball- 9 participants,

Special Events:

Family Dodgeball & Pizza Night (January 9, 2026)- 40 participants



Employee Development/Enrichment/Other:

MRPA Cape & Islands Regional Meeting (January 22, 2026)- Aimee Howell, Sharon Stark, and Sue Frederick attended the regional meeting with all other cape towns to discuss legislative matters, winter season, and upcoming summer season.

Community Center Use:

Aerobics Room – 57 Reservations

Lite Fitness with Susan Hunter, CFAL Chair Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Chatham Tai Chi, Full body Circuit with Rachel, First Night Chatham, Fun & Functional Fitness, CFAL Full Body Fitness, Heisig Belly Dance, Restorative Yoga, Friday Family Karate, Friday Family Tai Chi, Vinyasa Yoga.

Arts & Crafts Room – 4 Reservations

Crafty Chicks, Women’s Club Flower arrangements, Women’s Club craft projects.

Club Room – 22 Reservations

Women’s Club Board Meeting, Mary Byrne/What Now?, Women’s Club Stitches Club, Chatham Conservation Foundation, Men’s Club weekly discussion group, Friends and Gardeners Year-round, Friends of Chatham Waterways, Working Waterfront Committee, Women’s Club

Literature Group, Bolus card games, Chatham Chamber, Chatham Democratic Committee, AARP Tax Aide.

Conference Room – 17 Reservations

Chatham Garden Club budget meeting, League of Cape Cod Board meeting, Chatham Ecumenical Council for the Homeless, Chatham Garden Club, Chatham Republican Town Committee, Chatham Platform Tennis, Independence Day Parade Committee, Friends of Trees, Chatham Golf Advisory Committee, Chatham Cemetery Committee, Chatham Orpheum Board meeting, League of Cape Cod Book Club, Simpson meeting.

Gymnasium – 107 Reservations

Pickleball Mo-We-Fr 10-12; We & Fr 8-10, Tu & Th 8-10 and 10-12; Tuesday Night pickleball, Saturday night pickleball, Thursday night pickleball, Pickleball lessons, Fly Casting, Open Gym, Adult Pick-up badminton, Winter pick-up basketball, CFAL Indoor Walking Group, Winter Floor Hockey, Kindergarten Basketball, Recreation basketball grades 1 & 2.

Large Meeting Room – 14 Reservations

First Night Chatham, Men’s Club weekly meeting, Chatham Conservation Foundation, Women’s Club of Chatham, PARK Lazer Tag, USCG Auxiliary meeting, Chatham Garden Club, Chatham Department of Natural Resources, CPR/BLS Class, PARK Early Release

Serving Room – 16 Reservations

Private Mahjong, Community Mahjong, Men’s Club of Chatham, Women’s Club of Chatham, Chatham Merchants Association, Chatham Garden Club.

Fitness Room Access Scans

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
November	64	151	89	120	106	79	134	743
December	36	181	168	147	92	86	107	817
January	43	58	141	121	128	187	135	813

Active Fitness Room Memberships: Family Members- 490 Individual Members- 194

Parks & Recreation Commission:

The Parks & Recreation Commission did not meet in January.

Golf Advisory Committee:

The Golf Committee met on Thursday January 15th, 2026, and discussed the following topics: Sand Traps, Golf Course Sign Height, Invasive Species project, and reviewed the course project list.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah LaCross

Leah LaCross, MPA
Director of Community Services